

English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

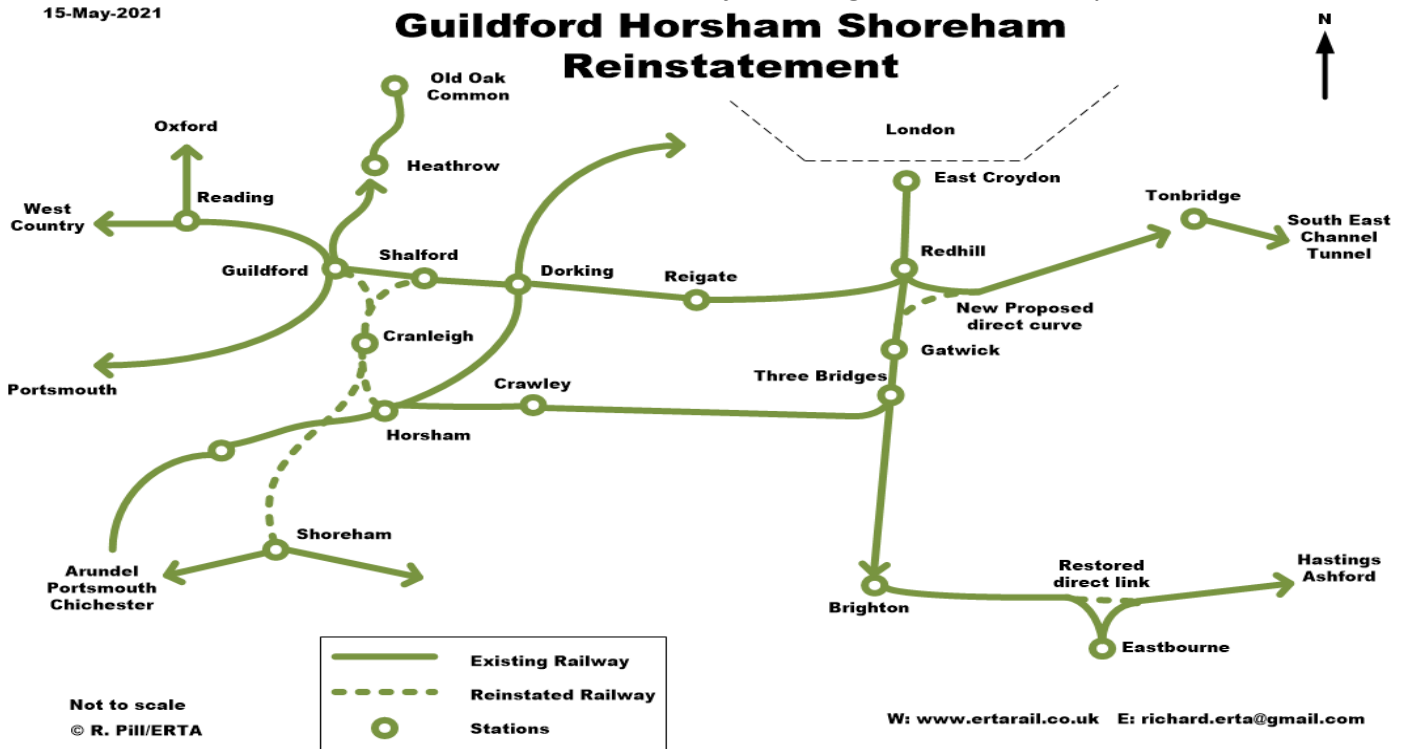
	Patrons: Sir Edmund Verney, The Rt Hon. the Lord Newby OBE, Mr George Bathurst, Professor Andrew N Williams BA, BM BCh, MSc, PhD, MRCP, FRCPC, FRHistS, + Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good repute.	
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https://ertarail.co.uk/	www.linkedin.com/in/richard-pill-erta	https://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/
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Horsham Public Meeting – ERTA seeks to gather the public, who in turn can persuade the powers that be to ‘bring back our tracks and trains’!

~ If ERTA had more active, reliable and regular contributors at its centre, it could aspire to do more. Please answer that call, join and get involved today! ~

15-May-2021

Guildford Horsham Shoreham Reinstatement



Map above is not the last word. We are not constrained by historical precedent. Let studies be done and come up with flexible, operational and do-able options!

Horsham Public Meeting continued: Guildford-Horsham-Shoreham Rail Link quest for support.

The way forward is to:

1. Be realistic, we can plant ideas, we cannot commit to £50k upwards studies to service a demand of a system laden with costs but not delivering anywhere near what is required in a Climate Emergency.
2. If you support the idea, aspiration and want these rail links, please write to your elected MP, the local councils along the line and offer to assist us with the effort.
3. We are not bound by history. Of course, we wish to put tracks back where they were on Guildford-Horsham and Horsham – Shoreham but also a new direct link with curves to the Arundel Valley Line, for optimal operational flexibility, diversity of trains and services.



Caption Above: Colin Crawford left chairing and George Bathurst, our invited speaker do the honours. Our thanks to both.

Horsham Public Meeting 26-03-2022 – notes by Richard Pill

Some 17 people attended the ERTA tabled Public Meeting on Saturday 26th March at the Unitarian Hall in Horsham adjacent to the central bus station. Colin Crawford chaired the meeting, whilst the Enticotts did refreshments and Richard Pill manned the book stall.

In what was a ‘not know who will come’ we were pleased to find those who came were of a congenial nature. The one cyclist who turned up was one of our speakers, Mr George Bathurst on the Windsor link. Engineering work on the railways had delayed some trying to get to the meeting, whilst others were more local.

Colin opened the meeting and gave an overview of the canal threat to the old trackbed between part of the former Guildford-Horsham railway and it may still come to an appeal. It stands however thrown out on a technical issue making the presiding council having to re-issue consultation and consider wider opinion. A point is that the canal has other routing options, the railway is not so lucky and needs the corridor of the former track-bed to go on with a broadening to accommodate a fenced off cycle-way and foot-way alongside, hence the idea of a ‘green corridor’.

ERTA supports the concept idea of the railway, in modern transit form, being reinstated as a local link. Rail links are connected to a wider rail network and integrally can carry local and wider regional people and goods off local and regional roads like no other comparable transport mode can, cutting emissions, parking issues and other negative pressures too much traffic on roads can bring.

The way ahead is technically fairly mapped out:

1. Get councils and MPs to support the idea and they in turn are better placed and connected to court potential sponsors and funding to commission studies be it business cases, engineering considerations, deviations or relocations where blockages exist and incrementally, starting maybe with Guildford-Horsham as Phase 1 via Cranleigh and Phase 2 both the Arundel Curve and

Horsham – Shoreham being implemented. This would allow Reading – Brighton direct and as well as Heathrow-Gatwick via Three Bridges.

2. Once formal studies are done and show ‘can/what’ can be done, then to turn to Government for support, more funding and ultimately go-ahead for delivery.

3. All ERTA can aspire to do is court support including from the public and encourage people to join ERTA, build a group and they in turn take on to involve and make representation to MP’s and Councils – who gets there first wins!

4. On timings, at one extreme East-West Rail between Oxford-Bedford-Cambridge has taken 35 years and still is not fully delivered, whereas others like the Borders Railway which has been successful as has other rail links like Ebbw Vale in Wales, been delivered relatively quicker. Many variables and politics can all play a part, as can public pressure and determination for a local rail alternative solution to current trends.

Questions and comments were on land use, state of local roads and the need for a through rail route to optimise usefulness. Previous studies were largely confined to a terminal branch between Guildford and Cranleigh, not Horsham, on that basis Surrey County Council have declared they do not support the rail scheme as no case. Cranleigh needs careful studying to see how sensitively a railway can be implemented either with a deviation and relocation mixture or a new bypass to the west and a new station in the vicinity. The gains of the railway would, on and off the tracks, prove its worth to local areas and wider ends socially, economically and environmentally. Given growth, given trends of local traffic, travel, congestion and much more, the rail link is a vital resource going forward, but this needs to be better appreciated at the heart of the political system, MP’s, Councils and Government. The model and dynamic involve could be repeated elsewhere nationwide.

The blocking of the route like at Southwater and elsewhere has to be balanced going forward with growing population and no public transport infrastructure able to modal shift people and/or goods by rail in critical corridors like Guildford-Horsham-Shoreham (Reading-South Coast direct and vice versa/not via London) is. It was noted the Brighton Main Line is reaching capacity and needs a relief line be it both Guildford-Horsham-Shoreham and some reinterpretation of a Lewes-Uckfield-Tunbridge Wells missing link as well, one on the eastern flank and our line, taking the western approaches. Brighton arguably the centre of both and radials thereof. Currently the gaps and legacy of closures remains damage done and needs rectifying. The needs have increased, not diminished and so on the social, economic and environmental fronts, personal, collective and structural, these gaps need re-railing.

Mr George Bathurst gave his talk next on what was needed to plug a 300-metre gap between the Slough-Windsor rail link and that of Staines-Waterside Station. There’s been protracted highs and lows promoting the scheme. The backers set out to build the case and play by the system. However, the system seems to be cynical of rail and puts more conditions, costs and seeming blockage each time, one ticks a box. The scheme reached GRIP Level 2 out of an 8 step Network Rail ladder. The scheme takes on a 3-sided motorway cordon hedged in by M4, M25 and M3 and a population like Slough, which has grown from 30, 000 in 1980 to 200, 000 today and elsewhere similar trends means we need to use land carefully and rail generally takes less land pro rata of

what it carries than trunk or motorway-style roads building does. The Windsor link makes a lot of sense and would better serve a top tourist centre and magnet and foster the towns well-being from a number of considerations.

The meeting finished at 16.00 hours and was congenial. We hope to repeat in the Autumn to continue to build and gather support for the rail link's return! Join us.

Coincidental:



Above left: The magnificent buildings of St Pancras in London taken March 2022. ERTA tables a Forum 'open to all' and wants more. Join us if not a member, attend Forums and make your contribution. We want more rails and less road traffic. Join us and help get our message across.

Above right: Looking east of the River Great Ouse in Bedford from Prebend Street Bridge. Could it be doing more for the environment? Extend navigation to Wolverton and less high hoist to Grand Union Canal benefit? Could sluices aid flood relief? The trees on the right need some tree management!

Below left: Looking north from Bedford River Bridge over the Bedford-Bletchley Railway. New east-west rail will probably have to revise this track layout. Currently the Bletchley shuttle weaves through single track sidings at about 10 mph. Speed it up!

Below right: No. 1 bus which links Bedford Bus Station with Kempston awaits a path to the Bedford Town Centre. ERTA has long called for all area bus operators to have common use ticketing. Makes good sense for bus users! Renationalise?



Amphill-Flitwick Forum – It is a work in progress – join us and strengthen our team!

Amphill-Flitwick Forum Meeting 30th April 2022 – Report by Richard Pill

Some 10 people turned out on the Bank Holiday weekend to attend our tabled meeting at The Swan Pub, 1 Dunstable Road, Bedford MK45 1HP T: 01525 754777 It is adjacent to the Thameslink served railway station and with ample parking and bus links too. <https://www.swaninflitwick.co.uk/menus/> We sat round a u-shaped set of tables and were served bacon rolls and drinks as wanted.

Apologies were received from a Mr Steve Anderson of Centre Parcs and Nadine Dorries MP for Mid Bedfordshire Constituency which includes Flitwick and Amphill.

We followed an agenda and there were many questions and discussions. Some ranged from the inadequacy of Flitwick Station in a context of growth and demand for more parking over coming years. Others that Amphill would be both a relief station and compliment Flitwick as well.

Bus integration, cycle-pedestrian access, lowering speed and installing either a footbridge or crossing at the junction of Station Road Amphill and A507 and the station access road which currently serves as an industrial complex. Some relocation packages would need brokering as per protection of lands west side of the Midland Main Line, which we understand is under threat of development in coming years.

It was admitted the population in a 5-mile catchment has and is expanding and Flitwick Station alone cannot cope with lack of land for expanded parking, the road layout and single bridge over the railway and congestion and parking in local streets all would be partly resolved with the addition of an Amphill railway station.

Action Stations:

It was explained that ERTA is a stretched voluntary outlet which is in the business of planting ideas. It needs public, elected representatives, all tiers of governance to support those ideas and in turn commission/access funding pots to work up the case and formal credentials with a view to courting Government support and ultimately a permission towards delivery. Landowners, leisure outlets, councils of all tiers, agencies and many more could contribute to a pot with studies in mind to find answers to questions, see what needs to be done and through policy and action, set about moving the agenda towards delivery.

Summary of key points:

1. It needs funding for a study
2. land retention to keep western approaches and other access routes viable
3. Relocation packages
4. May only be a half-hourly frequency of Thameslink's, but given plethora of frequency, it should be perfectly possible to absorb into a timetable.
5. Buses and inter-rail/bus-train ticketing could retain viability of bus networks more.

6. A need to get tiers of governance on board and in particular the Central Bedfordshire Unitary Council to help and work with us and be instrumental in gathering people, resources and round-tableing in a view of a good idea, not dismissing it.

7. The growth means something needs to be done to retained as a viable option.

Meeting closed 15.10pm and it was felt as a first post-pandemic, it was a useful exercise and potential still to build on towards getting local people to help more and give the vital support, holding elected representatives to account and take an interest.

Next meeting: same venue The Swan Pub, 1 Dunstable Road, Bedford MK45 1HP

T: 01525 754777 E: steph@theswanflitwick.co.uk It is adjacent to the Thameslink served railway station and with ample parking and bus links too. <https://www.swaninflitwick.co.uk/menus/> and will be **1pm food, 2-4pm business on Saturday 10th September** – all welcome to come, meet and join as members and offer to assist or lead accordingly please.

Below: Although a few years since this was done, remembering development and population is growing near and far, it shows how Ampthill could serve and provide relief to Flitwick and both enable rail to cater for more in such wakes! Please give us your support and get aboard

Place	Population	Place	Population
Flitwick	12, 700	Ridgmont	410
Westoning, Flitton and Greenfield	4, 700	Brogborough	343
Harlington	2260	Hulcote and Salford	210
Steppingley	233	Cranfield	4909
Eversholt	420	Lidlington	1350
Silsoe	1729	Clophill	1750
Woburn	933	Marston Moretaine Area	4560
Shefford Area	9330	Stewartby	1212
Haynes and Houghton Conquest	2710	Maulden	2900
Campton and Chicksands	2510	Wilstead	1980
Pulloxhill	850	Gravenhurst	600
Wavendon	787	Woburn Sands	2916
		Ampthill	7500
Sub Totals	39, 162		30, 640
Totals	69, 802		
10% Take up usage figure:	6980		
Divide by a 20 hour operating day = 349 people per hour		Divide by 4 trains each way per hour =	Approximately 87.25 each way boarding per train.
Population sources	Wikipedia and Central Beds Council Website		
Taken as an approximately 5 mile radius of Ampthill Station catchment potential area.			



Top Left: Richard Pill, Chairman of ERTA, welcomes arrivals and mans the ERTA Sales Stall. We seek opportunities where they can be courted. There's a lot of competition out there!

Top right: Vice Chairman Colin Crawford chairs many of our meetings as a. he is good at it and b. it frees Richard up to give support and fill gaps. We all work as a team and welcome more members to get on-board and help us too.

Bottom Left: Does not take much for a queue of traffic to form on many of our motorways, trunk roads and junctions these days. If Government and associated tiers/agencies do not take our rail calls seriously, this is the negative outcome!

Some dates for your diary!

1. **ERTA London Forum:** London Forum – Saturday 13 August will now be on Zoom.
2. **ERTA Ampthill-Flitwick Forum:** Saturday 10th September 1pm food, 2pm – 4pm business. All welcome. Venue: The Swan Pub at Flitwick (opposite the rail station and local bus stops round the corner. Ample parking. <https://www.swaninnflitwick.co.uk/> The Swan Pub, 1 Dunstable Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1HP T: 01525 754777 E: steph@theswanflitwick.co.uk
3. **Berkhamsted Public Meeting – Saturday 15th October** 12pm food (Wetherspoons: <https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/pubs/all-pubs/england/hertfordshire/the-crown-berkhamsted>), 2pm Public Meeting at Venue St Peters Court House, St Peter's Great Berkhamsted, Church Lane, BERKHAMSTED, Hertfordshire, HP4 2AX <https://www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk/about/courthouse/> Speakers to be announced (tba)

Note: If you wish to come to any of our events, it would be useful if you let us know you intend to come in advance and likewise, if you wish to assist or help as a volunteer in any way, **contact:** Mr Simon Barber: T. 0208 940 4399 E. simon4barber@gmail.com

From the Chair: The closures of local railways arced mainly from the late 1950's with the closure of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway (M&GN) through to Serpell early 1980's closure programme which included Woodhead and Tunbridge Wells-Eridge for example. There has been pathetic action since these dates to protect courses of old railways (contingency) and a lack-lustre official discernment, recognition and action to establish a nationwide reopening/rebuild/select new build programme with year-on-year delivery in mind. Government finds money for £100 billion HS2, £40 billion new roads, but our agenda, the local, regional, conventional rail reopenings and route protection/recovery/select new rails is overlooked largely, despite Government admitting there IS a Climate Emergency and we need to reduce emissions by 2030 for avoiding irreversible Climate Change. Even if you deny these matters, the 'now' retrospective and going forward need to re-rail Britain for good social, economic and environmental benefits make a lot of sense. Land used for parking or roads, is land lost for things like housing, employment, conservation or farming for example. ERTA is often a voice calling in a proverbial wilderness. Unless Government stoops down and gives a life-line for fostering modal shift of current networks, which are inadequate and our reopening/rebuild/new agendas, modal shift; choice cannot happen anything near like what we need. Once we are doing the right 'thing', then export and preach to others, alas, wanting cake and eat it seems the going rate value and a business-as-usual laissez-fare 'let the market decide', then to fail to plan, is to plan to fail! Let us do truth to power; it is now or never!

✂

Please Join as a Member of ERTA, help us help you!

<https://ertarail.co.uk/become-a-member/>

Tick if a New Member: _____ Tick if renewing as an existing member: _____

Membership of ERTA costs £15 per annum. I/We wish to join _____

I/We wish to explore volunteering opportunities (optional) _____

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____ **Postcode:** _____

Tel/Mobile: _____

Email _____

I/We hereby give consent to our data being used and stored for the purposes of communication with ERTA and its purposes compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) _____

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

Please send completed form and payment to ERTA Membership:

ERTA, 24c St Michael's Road, Bedford, MK40 2LT (01234 330090)

Join our free email loop for news and views:

E. richard.erta@gmail.com and see our website: <https://ertarail.co.uk/events/>